

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0167

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR AO

SUBJECT: TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT TO REJECT BANK OF ANGOLA
GUARANTEE

1. I CALLED ON THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT,
ALBINO DA CUNHA (APPOINTED BY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT), ON
FEBRUARY 10 AT HIS REQUEST TO TALK ABOUT THE EXIM CREDIT
FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO 737 BOEING AIRCRAFT AND THE EXIM
POSITION THAT THE BANK OF ANGOLA MUST BE THE GUARANTOR.

2. DA CUNHA SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN PUT
TO A VOTE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, HE IS CONVINCED THE
GOVERNMENT WILL REJECT THE EXIM POSITION THAT THE BANK OF ANGOLA
MUST BE THE GUARANTOR OF THE CREDIT. THE LIBERATION GROUPS
THAT MAKE UP THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA, HE SAID,
HAVE ADOPTED AS A MATTER OF POLICY THE COMPLETE REJECTION OF
ANY DEPENDENCE UPON PORTUGAL. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE ADDED,
THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CAN BE EXPECTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO TURN
DOWN THE EXIM PROPOSAL BECAUSE IF THE GOVERNMENT HAS REJECTED
DEPENDENCE ON PORTUGAL IT CANNOT THEN PERMIT A FOREIGN POWER
TO IMPOSE A DEPENDENT STATUS.

3. DA CUNHA SAID HE PERSONALLY AGREES WITH THE ATTITUDE OF
THE THREE LIBERATION GROUPS THAT NOW RUN THE GOVERNMENT.
HE FAILS TO SEE ANY VALIDITY IN THE LEGAL ARGUMENT THAT
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ONLY A PORTUGUESE INSTITUTION CAN PROVIDE THE REQUISITE

SOVEREIGN CONTINUITY. THE REASONING IS NOT ONLY FAULTY, HE ADDED, BUT HAS NO RELATION TO THE REAL WORLD; THE PEOPLE WHO WILL GOVERN ANGOLA IN THE FUTURE ARE ALREADY IN POWER. ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO DECIDE WHICH FACTION OR COALITION WILL TAKE OVER THE REINS ON NOVEMBER 11. COMMITMENTS MADE NOW WILL BE HONORED AFTER FULL INDEPENDENCE, HE CONCLUDED.

4. I THANKED DA CUNHA FOR HIS INTEREST AND HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. I TOLD HIM I WOULD SEE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER IN MORE DETAIL. CUNHA SAID IT IS THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (MPLA) WHO FEELS MOST STRONGLY ABOUT THE MATTER.

5. THE PORTUGUESE APPOINTED MINISTER OF ECONOMY, VASCO VIEIRA DE ALMEIDA, ARRIVED IN ANGOLA ON FEBRUARY 11 AND DA CUNHA PROMISED TO TALK WITH HIM AND ELICIT HIS VIEWS ON ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS. AT THE MOMENT, DA CUNHA SEES NO GUARANTOR ACCEPTABLE TO THE ANGOLANS OTHER THAN THE ANGOLAN CREDIT INSTITUTE (INSTITUTO DE CREDITO DE ANGOLA OR ICA, SEE LUANDA 1082).

6. I RECOMMEND THAT EXIM TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THIS MATTER. THE LIBERATION GROUPS HAVE BEGUN TO EXERCISE NATIONAL POWER FOR THE FIRST TIME AND THEY ARE SENSITIVE IN THE EXTREME TO REAL OR IMAGINED SLIGHTS TO NATIONAL DIGNITY. ANGOLA HAS THE CASH AND CAN DO WITHOUT THE CREDIT, IF NEED BE. EXIM COULD CARE LESS WHETHER THE ANGOLANS DO OR DO NOT TAKE THE CREDIT. I AM CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS MATTER WILL PUT US OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND MAKE DIFFICULT OUR DEALINGS IN OTHER AREAS. I COULD UNDERSTAND NOT ACCEDING TO THE ANGOLAN REQUEST IF A DIFFERENCE OF REAL SUBSTANCE EXISTED, BUT WHAT WE HAVE IS ONE INSTITUTION, EXIM, WITH GREATER FAITH IN PORTUGAL AND ITS INSTITUTIONS THAN IN ANGOLA; AND AN ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT, WITH THE FLUSH OF SELF-CONFIDENCE THAT ONLY INEXPERIENCE CAN PRODUCE, NOT ONLY REJECTING DEPENDENCE ON PORTUGAL, BUT INCLINED TO LOOK WITH DISDAIN ON PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC PROSPECTS.

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